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TO: Superintendents, Elementary Principals, Special Education Directors, Early Childhood Program Directors, Head Start Directors, Sixpence Program Directors

CC: Early Learning Connection Coordinators, Planning Region Chairs and Lead Agencies, ILCD Facilitators, EDN Supervisors, State Results Matter Task Force, Nebraska Special Education Advisory Council

FR: Melody Hobson, Administrator, Office of Early Childhood
Gary Sherman, Administrator, Office of Special Education

RE: MOVING TO SINGLE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM FOR RESULTS MATTER

This memo is to inform you of a decision made by NDE to move to a single assessment system for Results Matter B-5. The decision has been made to transition to Teaching Strategies GOLD for all districts and all children B-5 served by districts beginning in 2012-13. As those of you know who use CreativeCurriculum.net, that system will automatically convert all current cc.net users to GOLD beginning in 2011-12. The process for school districts who are currently using either OnlineCOR or AEPSi is that these districts will subscribe to GOLD by the 2012-13 year. Districts may elect to switch for the upcoming year (2011-12), or wait until 2012-13 in order to have a year of transition for planning and training teachers and administrators/supervisors.

This decision is based on a number of needs that have emerged over the past year and have been discussed with the State Results Matter Task Force. At their April 26, 2011 meeting, the Task Force came to consensus about the move to GOLD in 2012-13. Considerations included:

- Need to streamline, simplify and sustain data collection and data quality processes at every level.
- Need for a completely seamless B-5 assessment system to reduce data errors and improve efficiency.
- Need for a comprehensive, user-friendly system with multiple unique features and resources for teachers, families and administrators embedded in the system.

- Need for a system with the capacity and infrastructure to address and respond to multiple needs for managing a statewide system efficiently and effectively.
- In addition, the statutory requirement for NDE and the K-12 school system in Nebraska to use a single assessment system (NeSA) for comparability of data suggests this direction for Results Matter as well. The significant need for comparability of Results Matter early childhood data and confidence in the use of the data for decision-making at every level cannot be overstated.

Scarce resources (staff, time and money) to build and sustain a statewide system require that NDE look carefully and critically at the long-term impact of the systems we have in place and their costs/benefits. The move to a single assessment system with Teaching Strategies GOLD will position NDE and school districts to work together in a framework that is effective, efficient and sustainable over time.

This change may be painful for some districts and their early childhood partners in the short term, and will require retooling and retraining. NDE is working on a plan to support training statewide beginning this summer and throughout the upcoming 18 months as the transition is made. More details about training opportunities and subscription costs will be provided via email in the next few weeks.

NDE looks forward to working with you to make the transition as smooth as possible. It is our hope and expectation that the long-term benefits of this change will prove to be immensely beneficial and essential to supporting accountability at every level to improve outcomes for all young children in Nebraska.